



# News Release

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## **Death with Dignity Act annual report shows 103 people participated in 2011**

*A total of 255 terminally ill adults have received medication since law passed in 2009*

**OLYMPIA** — The state's third annual Death with Dignity Act report released today shows that 103 people requested and received lethal doses of medication in 2011. Since the 2009 law was passed, 255 terminally ill adults have received medication in Washington.

According to the report by the Washington State Department of Health, the 103 prescriptions were written by 80 different physicians and dispensed by 46 different pharmacists. The report covers January 1 to December 31, 2011. Participation increased 16 percent in 2011 from 2010.

Of the 103 people who received lethal doses of prescription medication, 94 are known to have died. Seventy died after taking the medication. Those who died were between the ages of 41 and 101. More than 90 percent lived west of the Cascades. Most had cancer. According to prescribing physicians, many of the patients who received medication expressed concern about loss of autonomy as a reason for requesting a prescription.

Under Washington's Death with Dignity Act, the Department of Health collects information from patients and providers who choose to participate, monitors compliance with reporting requirements, and produces an annual report.

The [2011 Death with Dignity Act report](http://www.doh.wa.gov/dwda/forms/DWDA2011.pdf) (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/dwda/forms/DWDA2011.pdf>) and information about the [Washington State Death with Dignity Act](http://www.doh.wa.gov/dwda/) (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/dwda/>) are on the agency website.

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